

DISCUSSION.

A student raised discussion on an untruthful child whom nothing seemed to cure. Apparently lies were vicious from laziness.

Another student said a child should not have a chance of telling a lie. Another suggested that the radical evil (laziness) in this case should be cured by making the child run errands. Perhaps her health was out of order, and that made her lazy.

THE ADVISABILITY OF A TRANSITION CLASS BETWEEN I_B AND II.

There was no paper read on this subject. Class II has now been divided into two divisions, IIA and II. After some discussion the following resolution was carried: "That as any student may give her pupils part of the programmes of two classes, at her own discretion, no further transition class is needed."

WHAT SUBJECTS TO LEAVE OUT OF CLASS II WHEN TIME IS LIMITED.

Miss Kitching's introduction to the discussion of this subject involved the following points:

- (1) That the P.U.S. time-table is intended to serve simply as a guide to the teacher in making her own, for it stands to reason that no two schoolrooms are identical as regards the work done, or the time allotted it.
- (2) That in making her own time-table the teacher must be careful that no two lessons requiring the same mental effort, follow one another in close proximity.
- (3) That it is better to leave the term's work unfinished,

than to rush the pupils through for the sake of having finished the work set.

The general outcome of the discussion was to the effect that some modification of the programme and time-table is absolutely necessary, each teacher using her own discretion in the matter. Somebody very wisely remarked that Miss Mason intends the programme to fit the child, and not, as some wildly imagine, the child to fit the programme

HOW PAST STUDENTS CAN KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE NEWEST FEATURES OF THE TRAINING AT SCALE HOW.

In opening this discussion the point I wish to maintain is that, in a general sense, there are no new features in the training at Scale How. If some features appear new, is it not because stress is laid at one time on a subject that has been weak, and at another time an opportunity arises of getting an expert to teach some other subject? On looking back over the nine or ten years that I know well, it is plain that this has often been the case, and that the subjects so cultivated have been on the P.U.S. programmes all the time.

For example, in 1901, my first year at Scale How, we enjoyed a delightful fortnight of drill and dancing under one of Mrs. Wordsworth's trained teachers, traditions of which still linger in the ball drill, practised by each generation of students. Since then Swedish drill has been in the ascendant, and it was taught by short visits from teachers trained at Bedford until a House of Education student was qualified to take the post of resident drill-mistress. Another instance of expert teaching occurred when Miss Stephens, with her London B.Sc. in mathematics and astronomy, was appointed to give nearly all her time to the teaching of

mathematics, and she also gave the lectures on astronomy, which were already on the time-table, arousing mingled feelings of fascination and despair in her hearers. One subject often loses, while another gains, as time brings changes. Picture-talk suffered a hitherto irreparable loss when Mrs. Firth left Ambleside. But the children in all classes of the practising school have music lessons from the students, as well as opportunities of hearing the music set for each term, as a consequence of Miss Cruse's talent. Just so scouting, which had been on the programme for years, first became organized when Miss Smith was inspired with the idea of carrying it out here with the students and practising school children. The want of Miss Barnett's experience in elocution has lately been supplied by a week's visit from Mr. Burrell, who teaches reading as a work of art. And Miss Mason's often-expressed wish that students should make their own designs for handicrafts—although attempts had been made to do this in clay, leather and wood—is being fulfilled with better success, thanks to four lectures on design given last term by Mr. Phillips, who now inspects both drawing and handicrafts. Miss Krüger's visit to explain her method of teaching French phonetics reminds us how much value has always been attached at Scale How to a beautiful French pronunciation, and, indeed, to the perfect pronunciation of any language. For in 1902, an Italian lady, staying in Grasmere, was invited to give us two lessons in Italian pronunciation, which were quite a revelation to me.

No doubt students who knew the other twelve years of the House of Education had the same experience as mine, and found that Miss Mason has always shown us, whenever she could secure the best teaching to be had in the subject concerned, how much she values such things as good reading, beautiful pronunciation, a wide acquaintance with good

music and great pictures, inspiring ideas in science, field work, and handwork.

If a subject were ever so expanded as to seem a new departure, it would doubtless be as fully explained to past students as scouting has been both in the *Children's Quarterly* for the last two years, and in the *Parents' Review* for September, 1910, and September, 1913.

But my best reason for maintaining that there are no new features in the training at Scale How, is that there are none in the Parents' Union School programmes. I have seen the original programme for Class II, dating from July, 1891, and it contains the same directions for work as those for the current term in all respects, except that fewer books are quoted, because twenty-two years ago many of the books we use were not written or not published in an accessible form. Does this seem at first sight a damaging statement to put forward in favour of Miss Mason's work?

But its continuity is due to its sound foundation upon "a philosophic theory of education." Applications of the method in detail, new books that fit the need, are, of course, included in the school programmes, always after a great deal of careful consideration. And the thoughtful study of each programme with the time-table belonging to it, does much to remind us of our training. In writing an essay, such as the present attempt, one is constantly referring to the title and examining the full scope of the words as they stand, to see whether one has kept to the subject suggested. So in teaching a subject in school, such as geography, whenever a doubt arises we may refer to the programme to see how the books used and methods indicated express the intentions of our Principal, that we may compare our achievement with her intention. Such a comparison is often forced upon us at the end of the term when the examination questions show what should have been our aim. I choose

geography as an instance, because it was the criticism lessons in geography which first impressed me with the fact that lessons are still criticized for the same faults or praised for applying the same principles that characterized them twelve years ago. The methods do not change, because the principles remain the same. And not long ago, in preparing, with Miss Mason's help, to expound to a meeting of teachers our methods of teaching each subject in the Parents' Union School, I discovered again that "Home Education" and "School Education" fully explain how each lesson should be taught. "Home Education" was first published before the House of Education was founded, yet the letters to the *Times* of 1912 proclaim the same principles that were advanced in 1886, and that are expanded and applied in the papers written by Miss Mason for successive annual Conferences, and published in the *Parents' Review*.

Perhaps it is a new feature that by a happy thought of Mrs. Franklin's every senior student must now prepare a paper on "How to teach," a single subject: e.g., natural history to Class II, literature to Class IV—anything that is on the school programme. It is done by referring to the Home Education Series, to the school programmes, to notes of lectures on practical education and of criticism lessons, to the Ambleside Geography books, in short, to the teaching received at Scale How. And, of course, the writing of this paper prepares a student to emulate those who have done the same thing so beautifully at many a P.N.E.U. Conference.

Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the books which form the basis of our training is qualified to explain P.N.E.U. methods and principles. But I fear lest we ex-students deserve to be accused, with other members of the P.N.E.U. of whom Miss Mason wrote in 1912, that they "hardly seemed to realize that we stand for the most

advanced, and, I suppose, the final movement in educational philosophy."

I am inclined to think that when we hear of the dramatic method of teaching, of Madame Montessori, of eurythmics, of correlating handwork with bookwork, and of other devices for "learning by doing" and self-expression—to mention a few of the conspicuous educational products of the day—the ardent teacher imagines that all that is best in these new departures is incorporated with the training at Scale How, and that she is left hopelessly out of date. She longs to keep in touch, and this is a point where it is indeed important to do so, for us who are still under Miss Mason's roof as for those who are testing her principles in their separate school-rooms. To quote from Miss Mason's letter to a headmaster, given in the prospectus for schools: "Those who do not regard education as a vital whole, but as a sort of conglomerate of good ideas, good plans, traditions, and experiences, do well to adopt and adapt any good idea they come across. But our conception of education is of a vital whole, harmonious, living, and effective."

It follows that we must remain diligent students of Miss Mason's writings in order to be ready to apply her principles to the newest craze, and see how far it agrees with them. We are not left in doubt as to whether we have judged rightly, for in the reviews of books which appear monthly in the *Parents' Review*, Miss Mason deals with modern educational works, and shows where the authors succeed, and often how they fail through mistaking a part for the whole. To give only two examples: Miss Finlay Johnson's *Dramatic Method of Teaching* was reviewed in November, 1911, when Miss Mason suggested that the results were due rather to the children's natural love of knowledge than to the dramatic method; and of Madame Montessori's book, reviewed in August, 1912, Miss Mason

said it "seems to err in employing the methods of applied science for a spiritual being."

In "Three Educational Idylls," written for the *Parents' Review*, November, 1912, Miss Mason compares the same two "impressive and picturesque idylls" with the Winchester Conference, and gives us the real meaning of that most encouraging, humbling, and inspiring event. And she prays "all members of the P.N.E.U. to make a thoughtful, earnest, and continuous study of a system which meets the perplexities and aspirations of our age, and which should issue in a generation of men and women, who shall be indeed, beings of large discourse, looking before and after."

The experience of a number of years must have taught many what I am just beginning to realize, that Miss Mason's claim that she offers a *philosophy* of education accounts for the unity, the permanence, the universal application, and indeed the success of the principles in which she has trained us. Let us hope that they are becoming, as she wishes, "a usual and natural part of our thinking." But her thought is so very much condensed that in order to realize the scope of her sayings we must ponder over them, though to students who are accustomed to her mode of expression her meaning should be plainer than to the rest of the world.

Of no book is this more true than of *The Saviour of the World*. But that it should repay study is shown by Miss Mason's statement in the April *Review*, that "it goes to the root of P.N.E.U. thought." She has herself told us that she has drawn her philosophy from the Gospels, where we may study and note "the development of that consummate philosophy which meets every occasion of our lives, all demands of the intellect, every uneasiness of the soul." And so, if we may look upon the issue of this wonderful series of *Meditations* as the latest feature of the training

at Scale How, it has been made possible for every ex-student to keep in touch with her leader, at a time when our knowledge of principles and loyal adherence to them may have an incalculable effect upon the future of our country. For "we have the one thing to offer which the whole world wants, an absolutely effective system of education, covering the whole nature of a child, the whole life of man."

AGNES C. DRURY.

HOW WE CAN BE KEPT IN TOUCH WITH NEW FEATURES AT SCALE HOW.

In writing this paper I have taken up the subject on two sides only—scouting and elocution.

Of all parts of the Scale How training that would be most easy to learn without even having actually come in touch with it as a student, scouting is surely the simplest. Not only are the rules and whole work set out very completely in a recent number of the *Parents' Review* for anyone to adapt to her own use, provided she is willing to comply with a few simple regulations, but it would seem impossible to avoid coming into contact with at least *some* of the scout-like notions that are abroad to-day. The Parents' Union School Scouts, as stated at their outset, do not wish to become a separate organization, but we wish to follow up all that is best in this new force that has lately come into play, not taking their ideas and withholding our loyalty from either Girl Guides or Boy Scouts, but rather throwing our lot in with theirs in the work for a common object—a desire for better citizenship—that is a desire for better citizens.

With this end in view our field of work is unlimited. There is room and to spare for every scrap of initiative and power of organization. However, the greater part of the tests—which compose the scouting work—has already been

compiled. These tests are so arranged that with a *small* amount of extra work a child following the P.U.S. programme can gain certain "tassel honours" for much of her ordinary school work.

Few people who wished to take up scouting would find opposition, but if they should, I would suggest that the best arguments lie on the side of citizenship. Scouting, as an end in itself, always seems to me a futility, a delight that soon palls. But taken as a discipline that leads to a better self-command, or as a means of further discovery of one's own powers leading to a fuller self-reliance, scouting must prove of infinite avail. As an example, the scout-like habit of keen observation, the basis of which may have been laid by some simple test work, cannot fail to give increasing pleasure. Only those who have tried it know how unobservant the world in general is—but have at least found out something worth knowing, and that is that there is much in the world open to them alone in future.

Sometimes students find great difficulty in arranging for scouting where there is only one child. But it seems to me that scouting might help that child very much in all her work, and make him, or more often her, feel doubly that he or she is one of a body, though only a single worker.

As all particulars concerning the tassel work have been given in the *Parents' Review*, I will leave that.

Those who wish to keep in touch with the P.U.S. scouting would do well to get at least *Scouting for Boys*. This contains much useful information, and gives the foundations of practically all scouting games, which, like other games, are usually only variations of one or two familiar games that we all know. Never hesitate to take up scouting because you are afraid you have not enough initiative, enough ideas to carry it out! Once you start, and long before you have exhausted nearly all the material to be found in any such

book as *Scouting for Boys*, it will be discovered that in scouting many of the "good ideas" that have ever come to you on any subject—let alone scouting—can be utilized. If you admire that part of the Montessori teaching which insists on the exercise of self-control whilst maintaining an "anxious silence," introduce the keeping of a silence which is *not* anxious—only interested through scouting.

In scouting tassel work, for example, one term we tried listening with closed eyes for five minutes a day for a week to see how many sounds could be distinguished at the same time. I believe some got as many as fifteen or twenty sounds when listening near running water.

Sometimes a point crops up in a nature lesson that you would like to expand or put into practice. There is no time in ordinary lesson hours, but scouting provides ample time and scope. Be on the look-out for ideas, and they always come.

Last year Mr. Burrell gave a special course of elocution lessons, but as to whether these are to be a permanent part of the training in the future I don't know. The greater part of his teaching is to be found in a book he wrote specifically for elementary schools, but in which he has enumerated all his "rules." Somewhere lately in my frantic search for helpful "tips" on the subject I have found that "elocution cannot be learned from books"! I believe this is so; but, for all that, insistence on the broad rules given in such a book as Mr. Burrell's cannot but benefit ourselves and those we have to teach.

Mr. Burrell's methods of procedure were amusing, to say the least of it, to the onlooker. He is one of those delightful people who insists on justification of criticism, and it was the consequent thoughts he made us think about our own and others' mistakes that really helped.

This is how he usually proceeded. First with ingratiating

consideration of his victim's feelings—the class consisting of six or more people—he would invite her to state that she “liked reading prose *much* better than poetry.” He would then hand her a poem! The next move was no less disconcerting. The reader would announce the title with more or less assumed ease, and having got, as she thought, safely through the two first lines of the poem would be pulled up short. “Do you mean ‘The *Charge* of the Light Brigade’? or ‘The *Charge* of the *Light* Brigade’? Well, perhaps you didn’t mean either, we’ll assume that you meant ‘The *Charge* of the *Light Brigade*.’” The reader had probably never thought about it all, and this was just the point. If she could justify any emphasis, inflection, modulation introduced in any line, well and good, but she was certainly not allowed to pass from any one line to another till she *could* justify every tone.

Another rather disconcerting method of making us think was to give a poem such as “The Lady of Shalott,” and get one verse read through, then another. The point in this poem was the constant repetition of the title, and any variation in the manner of reading those four words was carefully noted. The next move was to ask, “Would you imagine that that line was to be produced in exactly the same manner each time, or differently?” Someone would venture the suggestion that it should be varied. “Try it,” was invariably the answer to suggestions, and only by making the reader prove her own mistake was any answer ever given.

Beyond exacting all one’s “trying powers,” the very utmost of one’s *will* to read better, Mr. Burrell asked little, and always managed to encourage and coax the very best out of the class in the end. Beyond everything, the Pause—the Golden Rule—was insisted on time after time, and we were told that ninety-nine in a hundred readers read

much too fast, giving no time for the “word pictures” they are trying to create to become focussed in the minds of the listener, or even to carry to him.

Mr. Burrell greatly advised the cultivation of “story telling,” a simple and pleasure-giving art, which is *not* difficult to acquire provided that sufficient time and patience are allowed for it, and that we do not expect it to come without any painstaking any more than any other art. As to how far you can “keep in touch” with *this* new part of the training it is difficult to say, but there cannot be a better way than by giving special attention to elocution in reading time. P.U.S. children have so much reading to do that they ought to have every opportunity of reading well from the start. Any good book on elocution will show the right lines to pursue, and it was interesting to note that Mr. Burrell had no hesitation in saying that there was no reason why everyone should not read well, provided there is no actual physical defect. For lack of r’s and th’s he had no sympathy, only plenty of exercises with which he guaranteed to produce those maltreated letters. He gave examples of how this is to be done, which may be found in his book on elocution.

One other very striking feature of his teaching was this. If we are ever puzzled in recitation as how to express fear, surprise, disappointment, anger, etc., we were, as he said, “To go to the child to find out.” Watch a child in any and all humours, imitate and adopt his expressions, his gesticulations, his intonations, and *not* those that we suppose to be right for the occasion, which more often than not are hopelessly inappropriate. To get children to take up story telling it might be as well to adopt it as one of the many ideas for scouting, and let the children do it for their own amusement as scouts.

DISCUSSION.

The question was asked, why we should join P.U. Scouts, instead of Boy Scouts or Girl Guides? and the reply was, that it was better to join the real ones when this is possible. The question was raised as to costume, some people thinking it might afford protection and privileges on certain occasions.

The fact of wearing a uniform is in itself a privilege, and Miss Curry said that in some cases it might be well to adopt some part of the uniform, as the hat or a tie, etc.

With regard to the question as to how expert knowledge could be handed on, it was suggested that lectures should be given in London (at the club room if we have one), that papers on special subjects should be sent to the PLANT, and that notice might be given to ex-students when special lectures are to be given. It was pointed out that Mdlle. Krüger and others have lectured in London from time to time, and it was asked whether it was fair on the present students to give them additional work, though they have always proved quite willing when asked.

A resolution was passed: That with any lessons given on special subjects at Scale How, articles should be written by present students to the PLANT.

SPELLING OTHER THAN BY DICTATION.

I have been asked to write a paper on "The Teaching of Spelling otherwise than by Dictation," taking for granted that dictation is the first and best means of proving spelling.

That it is one of the most important subjects we have to deal with only dawns on one after varied experience with

weak spellers and seeing the great drawback it is to them when neglected.

The quick speller learns to spell by reading.

Transcription also helps him, and

Committing a short sentence to memory and writing it.

We find it necessary in Class IB to take spelling and dictation on alternate days through the week. Short, quick lessons of twenty minutes.

This paper is only a short one to introduce a discussion on the subject, as I am anxious to gain rather than give information.

Is it always advisable to take a paragraph from a book and learn all the words in it? Is there not the danger of spending time over words which need no learning, which are spelt just as they are pronounced, and yet one wants the pupil to see them in print?

It has been suggested that a pupil does not learn a word by spelling it aloud, that he must write it really to learn it perfectly.

A suggestion for a lesson for older pupils.

Take them into an imaginary shop, and each one gives the name of something he sees there, or for an imaginary walk or journey, and each gives the name of a thing seen on the way. They get very keen.

SKETCH OF SPELLING LESSON FOR CLASS IB.

Time 20 minutes.

The words to be learnt should be carefully selected. As many as possible should be model words, to build up others on.

The chief aim: To present the words again and again, until thoroughly mastered. The weak pupils should do most of the work aloud, the quicker ones following, and writing when necessary.

(1) Look carefully at a word in print.

(2) Write it in the air from memory.